Douglas Fairbanks Jr. Named Her

Most Outstanding Natural Beauty

HOLLYWOOD—Deborah Kerr says she feels like the girl who was often a bridesmaid and never a bride for she has been nominated for an Academy Award five times without receiving the coveted Oscar. But she has a sense of humor about this and continues to turn in one fine performance after another.

Deborah had just finished shooting on "Count Your Blessings" and received me in her dressing room at MGM in revealing slacks and a sweater.

"You look so pretty and fresh!" I exclaimed.

"Everyone tells me I'm looking well," Deborah smiled, "and I'm happy and enjoying my work, and there is no tonic more effective."

"I've never seen your figure in better shape," I commented.

"When I was in London I started playing tennis again—we had strong, fast sets and I felt much better for it. People often have a weight problem when they are unhappy," Debbie observed. "This is more psychological than most of us realize. When something disturbs me and when things are turbulent, my weight soars up. My doctor told me that worry and fatigue make the tissues puffy and cause you to look heavy. I believe this, because when life is not beset with problems and I am happy as I am now, my weight doesn't vary."

I asked her if she weighed every day.

"No. But I can tell by my clothes if I've gained and I never allow myself to go more than two pounds over. It is so easy to take off new weight. I can lose two pounds in one day if I have my favorite diet of cottage cheese and prunes three times a day. This gives me energy but is low in calories."

Debbie lamented the fact that so many people undermine their health with foolish diets.

"I learned during the war when we were on limited rations what an important part diet plays in the way you feel and look.

"We were so long without anything green or fresh and with very little meat and no butter that my nails, skin and hair deteriorated. I believe that even my thinking and my attitude toward life were effected."

I told Deborah that Douglas Fairbanks Jr. had named her the most outstanding natural beauty he had ever seen. She accepted this compliment modestly.

"Make-up does sensational things for some people, but I have discovered that the less I use the better I look."

I complimented her on her flawless complexion.

"I'm a natural redhead, and I can't take much sun but even so my skin became terribly dry once I left foggy London. When you live here I've discovered you must take better care of your complexion. Mine is so fine I could never use heavy creams without getting bumps. But now they make such wonderful moisture lotions that my problem is solved."

We talked about clothes.

"One should always compromise with fashion so as to wear what is becoming. I have no intention of raising my skirts more than 16 inches and that is with heels on. And I have never owned a pair of Bermuda shorts. They have been in style a long time but I feel very few women can wear them. Who but a teenager has long slim legs or pretty enough knees to get away with such an awkward length?"

I told Deborah that she has the reputation of being one of the most co-operative stars in Hollywood.

"I'm essentially easy going," she admitted. "All my life I have believed that everything works out for the best. Don't fight life—have a sense of proportion about what happens—a sense of humor. This keeps you from exaggerating trifles.

"The more I look around me the more it seems the reason people don't get along is that so many of us lack a sense of humor.

"When you are full of tension you are apt to lose your perspective. Americans are born with a bundle of energy and a driving ambition and this often makes them go beyond their endurance.

"I try not to crowd too much into one day or to make appointments too close together. It isn't a rule I can always follow," Deborah admitted, "but it is always a goal."

ADVICE TO MILADY

By Lydia Lane

DEBORAH KERR . . . five times nominated for Academy Award.

THOUGHT FOR FOOD . . .

. . . By MURIEL WILSON

Vegetable Miracles

IS your cooking anonymous or does it bear your signature? Your own tastes, imagination, whims and personality can identify your cooking as surely as your signature on a letter. It is the little personal touches that make cooking particularly yours. Originality is the magic ingredient that makes food distinctive.

Without a little dash of imagination vegetable cookery can be terribly dull. The unimaginative cook serves the same old boiled potatoes, the same boiled carrots, peas and beans every day. Can you wonder that families are, to say the least, uninterested in eating vegetables.

If the members of your family are indifferent to vegetables or if they are vegetable-haters it is time to do something about it. Right now let us consider a few tricks to glamorize and artfully season these step-children of the dinner table.

Take potatoes. . . . Let us rewrite the score and play some variations on the theme of mashed potatoes.

The Irish are the originators of a dish called Potatoes Colcannon. This is a snowy pile of mashed potatoes on a platter. In Galway the potatoes are mashed with buttermilk and finely chopped scallions, then gobs of butter are dropped into indentations made with the back of a tablespoon.

In another part of Ireland a great piece of butter is buried in the mound and slices of fried Irish bacon leaned up against the pile. My own version of this traditional Irish dish is to mix chopped green onions and finely chopped cooked broccoli with well-seasoned mashed potatoes. Mound on a platter, make a large indentation on the top and pour in melted butter. Garnish with small flowerettes of cooked broccoli. Sure and it's pretty, too.

Then there are hash-brown-onion-potatoes. Dice four cups raw potatoes. Cook in one-quarter cup melted butter in a heavy skillet until brown. Add one tin onion soup, cover and simmer 10 minutes. Remove the cover and cook for a few more minutes to evaporate some of the liquid. Stir often.

Never underestimate the glamor of a carrot. Crisp-cooked, Oriental style, carrots taste like a different vegetable. Coarsely shred five or six carrots, sprinkle with half a teaspoon salt. Cook, covered with two tablespoons melted butter five to seven minutes. Season with a dash of nutmeg and top with snippets of parsley.

Another way to glamorize carrots . . . simply add pineapple tidbits to buttered, diced carrots. Sprinkle with a little finely chopped mint.

Carrots Ambrosia will make a carrot-hater ask for more . . . Simmer-cook two cups cooked carrot strips in one-quarter cup butter, one-quarter cup sugar and one tablespoon mint jelly until glazed. And for nippy carrots . . . simmer until bubbly two tablespoons prepared mustard. Pour over two or three cups cooked carrot slices (cut crosswise).

When we were children it took the mighty effort of Popeye to remove spinach from behind the eight ball. As far as some people are concerned it is still far from popular . . . half the refrigerators in the land hold dishes of left-over spinach. Have you really explored its possibilities? Try it chopped with hot French dressing poured over. Or add chopped cooked eggs or crumbled crisp bacon or lime butter (add the juice of a lime to melted butter). A whisper of nutmeg or tarragon vinegar compliment spinach.

Last week I overheard a European woman explaining to a Chinese vegetable dealer why she didn't want the tops removed from the beets she was buying. I am a beet-top enthusiast, too. Cooked with only a smidgin of water, drained, chopped and seasoned with a little tarragon vinegar and a dollop of butter they are a gourmet dish.

Beets dressed with tangy fresh orange butter have a delicate and delicious flavor. Another flavorsome sauce for beets is made with two tablespoons each melted butter and cream, one tablespoon horseradish plus one-quarter teaspoon accent. Pour over hot beets.

Many otherwise good cooks fall down on vegetable cookery. The most succulent vegetable can be ruined by overcooking. Far better a little underdone than cooked to a mush and all the goodness evaporated in steam. Take a note from the Chinese and crisp-cook your vegetables.